

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9-13, 15 and 16 are pending in this application.

I. Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejects claims 1-3, 6-13, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Velzel et al. (WO 02/20471). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites “an organic compound having 1-10 carbon atoms and 1-10 polar organic groups, wherein the polar organic groups are selected from **carboxylic acid, hydroxyl**, amine and/or amide groups”. Thus, claim 1 recites carboxylic acid (CH_3COOH) as a polar organic group, and **the organic compound added to the molten urea is therefore not a salt.**

The Velzel et al. reference discloses the use of calcium acetate ($\text{Ca}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2$) (**a salt**) as an additive.

The Examiner states “Even taking the carboxylate salt exemplified, this is not patentably distinct from a carboxy acid since it is placed in water” (see Office Action, page 4, lines 4-5).

However, as discussed in the present specification, when a salt is introduced into the urea melt, a strong reduction in pH is observed in the granules of the reference. Thus, the introduction of inorganic salts into the urea melt results in a **strong decrease of the pH** when the salt is dissolved in water (see page 2, lines 11-21 of the specification).

On the other hand, when an organic compound having a polar organic group, such as a carboxylic acid, is used, the **strong decrease of pH is prevented.**

It would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to add an organic compound having a polar organic group, such as a carboxylic acid, to avoid pH reduction in view of the Velzel et al. reference. The reference provides no teaching or suggestion that using a carboxylic acid avoids pH reduction. Therefore, a person of ordinary skill in the art would have had no reason or rationale to replace a carboxylic acid salt with a carboxylic acid from the disclosure of the reference, or any other cited reference.

Accordingly, claim 1 would not have been obvious over the Velzel et al.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 9-13, 15 and 16 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, and thus also would not have been obvious over the reference.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

For these reasons, Applicants take the position that the presently claimed invention is clearly patentable over the applied reference.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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